Letter from Taizé

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A heart that trusts

Vaiting before God in passionate expectancy is ıot beyond human ability.

Contemplation is often seen as the opposite ɔf action. It is believed to be passivity, an escape rom the real struggles. But this is answered by he facts: some Christians give themselves so bundantly, they are committed in the front lines, nd yet they remain at the very wellsprings of conemplation.

What are we to understand by contemplaion? Quite simply the attitude whereby our vhole being is totally seized by the wonder of a resence. When we understand intellectually the ast reality of the beauty of things, there may be sense in which that takes hold of us, but only artially. Our whole being, emotions and all, can e entirely caught up in the reality of the love of Iod.

There are some who are obsessed by the subective experience of God's silence, as if the preence of God were totally bound up with our pereption, with what we feel.

Could they have forgotten that God is present also at times when enthusiasm evaporates and when all apparent resonance vanishes?

The day will come when each one of us will know, and perhaps even say: no, God did not go away, I was the one who was absent. God was my companion at every step of the way.

And there come moments when God is everything.

Before you were born, I dreamed of you, says God.

When we realize that God has loved us first, inevitably we are led to rend the veil under which we were hiding.

Here, love is the touchstone. In its intimate relationship with the love of God, contemplation leads us to the love of neighbour. John the Evangelist warns us against the hypocrisy that confesses love of God with the lips and holds hatred in the heart for one's brothers and sisters. Love for God is authenticated by the love we show to those entrusted to us.

Faced with the urgent need for the Gospel to be nade present at the heart of the human family, ve are conscious of how limited the resources of our community are when compared with the vast orizons opening out on this eve of a new milenium.

What are you, little community? An efficient nstrument?

No. Never. Fine as that may be.

Perhaps a group of men united to be tronger, humanly speaking, in order to realize heir own aims?

Not that either.

So, could we be living a common life in order o be comfortable together?

No. The community would then become an nd in itself, and that would allow us to settle own in cosy little nests. Being happy together? Certainly, but in the context of the offering of our ives.

What are you, little community, spread out in different parts of the world?

A parable of communion, a simple reflection of that unique communion which is the Body of Christ, his Church, and therefore a ferment in the human family.

What is your calling?

In our common life, we can only move forward by discovering ever anew the miracle of love, in daily forgiveness, heartfelt trust, and peace-filled contemplation of those entrusted to us. When we move away from the miracle of love all is lost, everything comes apart.

Little community, what might be God's desire for you?

To be made alive by drawing nearer to the holiness of Christ.

Two extracts from a book by Brother Roger,
A HEART THAT TRUSTS, that will be published February 1986,
by Mowbray's, Oxford, U.K.

Looking towards Madras and Barcelona

"If a trusting heart were at the beginning of everything, if it guided your every step, big or small, you would go a long way." This sentence from the Letter from the Desert speaks about an inner journey, but it applies just as well to the road to BARCELONA and especially to MADRAS! Preparing for the meetings alone and then with others, whether or not they are going to MADRAS or BARCELONA, will become more important during the last few months of the year. Reflection could be centred on these four points: **going forward as a pilgrim, as someone who is being sent, as someone living in solidarity with the whole human family, and as someone trying to discover a new face of the Church.**

As **pilgrims** we set out, finding strength in prayer to accept and welcome what God has prepared for us. Often this is something unexpected that opens up a totally new horizon. In the East, the word pilgrim is translated by "the one who bows down", like a person who is able to recognize God on the road of life and the gift he gives through the people we meet. Pilgrims keep moving forward because they know that Christ goes before them.

- How can we see others in this way?
- How is prayer present in our lives, both to place us before the gift of God and to express our thanks?
- What Bible texts help us to live this dimension of "pilgrimage"? Some suggestions: Genesis 12,1-4, Hebrews 11,8-11, Luke 9,58, Matthew 16,24-26, Lk 24,13-35.
- How can we be receptive and have an attitude of welcome?
- Being a pilgrim means being ourselves, with no protection, with open hands. How can we live out this kind of surrender, of vulnerability in trust?
- How can we accept the fact that something will change in our life? What experiences of this have we already had?
- How can we allow others to see what we have discovered?
- How can the whole community that is sending someone also be like a pilgrim? How can we express the hopes of this community and what it desires to receive from others?

As **people who are being sent out** on mission by a group or parish community we need, in a certain sense, to forget ourselves, so as to be witnesses. We are accepting a responsibility not only before and during the meeting, but above all when we return home.Those who have shown their trust by allowing us to represent them expect a message from us. The people we meet in Madras or Barcelona are also sending us on a mission, but this time to our own home!

- What Bible texts can remind us of the meaning of being a "witness" or "someone who is sent"? Some suggestions: Jeremiah 1,4-9, 2 Corinthians 5,17-20, Luke 10,1-9, Matthew 10,40-42, John 20,19-23.
- What can we propose to our group or parish to express the fact that we are being sent and its meaning? How can the universality of the Church be expressed (people of all ages, different denominations, cultural minorities, etc.)?
- How can the experiences of those sending us be gathered together and carried with us? Try to communicate the essential aspects of what each group does to build up the Church, to make it grow in love and hope. This question also helps the local community to become more aware of itself, so perhaps you can propose a meeting on this theme with people from all the different groups present.
- As people who are sent by others, are we ready to put aside all that is only personal curiosity, so as really to be a witness to the community that is sending us?
- How can we be witnesses more by our life than by our words?

Going to Madras or Barcelona is an expression of **solidarity with all the peoples of the earth.** Some have already entered this solidarity through being involved in Third World groups or in groups that work with the deprived, the lonely, and those who are discriminated against, at home. The meetings in Madras and Barcelona are a call to another form of solidarity: that of visiting others and sharing their lives.

- How can this solidarity be put into practice, especially regarding material sharing, on a personal and community level during the time of preparation?
- Is solidarity with the poor, the old, the sick, with those who are forgotten and rejected a reality in my life?
- How can I begin to simplify my life-style?
- How can such solidarity be continued after the meeting? How can the experience of dialogue and reconciliation in Madras and Barcelona foster a search for peace and justice at home?
- You can also reflect with others on the questions in the text for the United Nations.

"**A yes because of Christ leaves you vulnerable.** It makes it impossible for you to run away from yourself and from an essential solidarity with others. Could you run away from Christ in the communion of his Body, the Church, which is shaken on all sides, and flee a world ridden with suffering?" This part of the Letter from the Desert concerns another series of questions:

- How can this new stage of the pilgrimage, of an inner pilgrimage, help me to find my place in the life of the Church, on the local and universal levels?
- What is changing in my view of the communion of the Church?
- How can I be more attentive and reject all that is divisive?
- What things should I change in my life because of my commitment to follow Christ? □

In order to encourage one anothe in a pilgrimage of trust in your area you can contact others throug these people and meetings:

Prayer of departure before the Barcelona Meet ing: 8pm Saturday 28th December in Ealin Abbey, London W5 (Tube: Ealing). All are wel come. Details: Cathy Crozier, 01 997 5870 (home 636 7366 (work). The coaches to Barcelona wi leave from the Abbey on Sunday morning.

IRELAND
Collette O'Brien, 05047-63302. Mary Loughrey 0266-48947. Kieran Mc Loughlin, 01-894332. S Catherine O'Flynn, 061-315373.

SCOTLAND
Glasgow: Alan and Lorna Nimmo, (0389) 841455 John Callan, (0389) 72025. **Edinburgh:** Richar Weir, 031 652 2447; Malcolm and Mary-Clar McMillan, 031 337 1451. **Aberdeen:** Sarah-Jan Reid, 322719. **Dundee:** Cwti Green, 459473.
WALES
Cardiff: Meurig Williams, 618232. **Swansea:** Clar Jones, 71420. **Brecon:** Louise Chappell, 2854 **Bangor:** Ian McCarthy, 19 High Street.
NORTH-EAST
Newcastle/Tyne: Jennie, Louise, and Jimmy, 19 Saltwell Rd,NE8 4TL; Gill Richardson, 262 6787 **Durham:** David and Sally Pearson, 711952 **Cleveland:** Caroline Wild, 6 Studley Rd, Middles brough; Ian Parker, (0642) 701247. **York an Ripon:** Smitha and Swapna Prasadam, College c Ripon & York, College Rd, Ripon. **Leeds:** Stev Burns, 789767. **Bradford:** Keri Thomas, Clec kheaton 872131. **Sheffield:** Philip and Susa Rolfe, 686496.
NORTH-WEST
Cumbria: Michael Fischer, Whitehaven 4578 **Blackpool:** Clare Gooden, 51295. **Preston:** Bren dan Cook, 728612 (hm),263805 (wk). **Skel mersdale:** Sister Margaret McCarthy, 23245. **Bol ton:** The Brennan family, 392315. **Burnley:** Dere Grasby, 24946. **Lancaster:** Jane Wooten, St Mar tin's College,LA1 3JD. **Liverpool:** Cathy Johnson Eton Lodge, 051 772 1759; Christian Browne, 05 263 6578 ; Clare Down, c/o L'Arche: 051 22 3526. **Kirkby:** The Hawley family 051 547 2155. **Manchester:** Niall Cooper, 061 226 0066; John and Sheena Warmisham, 33 King Street, Salford M7 0AX. **Altrincham:** Sister Jen Bromham 06 928 1440.
WEST MIDLANDS
Worcestershire: Georgina Virr, Wichenford 57 **Birmingham:** Judith Horton, 021 445 3352; Ji Eddowes, 429 2536. **Walsall:** Luke Dempsey Brownhills 372908. **Coventry:** Mary Houston Dept.of History and Politics, The Polytechnic. **Ox ford:** Margaret Lloyd, 16 Crown Street; Andrew Saville, Worcester College. **Banbury:** The Condr family, (0295) 720252.
EAST MIDLANDS
Nottingham: Barbara Duzniak, 812647. **Leices ter:** The Chadwick family, 703844. **Northampton** The Fox family, 859444 (afternoon meeting on 7t Dec.).; Maria Pizzoni, 714840. **Lincolnshire** Cathy Davies, 23a Holyrood Walk, Spalding, PE1 2PB. **Cambridge:** Wendy Lidgate, New Hal Stephen and Margaret Cherry, 323099. **Norwich** Fr. Simon Talbott, 46971.
SOUTH-WEST
Reading: Sue Penson, (0734) 471578; Stephani Pape, (0491) 872149. **Newbury:** The Hawkey fam ily, 41655. **Portsmouth:** Shân and Mark Litjen 822430. **Southampton:** Alison Davis, 584783. **Isl of Wight:** Dominic Fitzpatrick, (0983) 63962. **Bris tol:** Cathy Payne, 211954; Paddy Hobbs,15 Bat Buildings,BS6. **Plymouth:** Maureen Leckie,Co lege of St Mark & St John, Derriford Road. **Jersey** Evelyne Maloret, 31280.

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December

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the underlined one is suggested. The reference in italics shows the source of the short reading.

SUN 1 May the Lord make you grow, so that our love overflows for each other and for veryone. May he confirm your hearts in holiess.
er 33.14-16 • *1 Thess 3.12-4.2* • Lk 21.25-28,34-36

Mon 2 The Lord says: I will send out peace, owing like a river. When you see this, your eart will rejoice.
aiah 66.12-14a • Revelation 1.4-8 • Matthew 24.23-27

ue 3 Jesus said: The heavens and the earth vill pass away, but my words will never pass way.
1.2-3,16-18 • Rev 1.17-18 • *Mt 24.32-36*

Ved 4 Isaiah said: The peoples of the earth vill say, « Come, let us go up to the mountain f the Lord, for him to teach us his ways and or us to walk in his paths.
2.2-5 • Rev 2.1-7 • Mt 24.42-47

hu 5 The Lord says: I know the trials you ave suffered and your poverty ; yet you are ch: do not fear suffering, remain faithful, ven to the point of death, and I will give you he crown of life.
4.2,5-6 • *Rev 2.8-10* • Mt 25.1-3

ri 6 In a parable, the master said to his faithul servant, « Well done, good and faithful serant. You have been faithful with a little, I will ntrust you with much more. Come and share our master's happiness ! »
5.1-4 • Rev 3.7-8,11-13 • *Mt 25.14-28*

at 7 In a vision, Isaiah heard the voice of the ord saying, « Whom shall I send ? » And he eplied, « Here am I, send me. »
6.1-8 • Mt 25.34-40

SUN 8 Mary said: My soul praises the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour, for he has been mindful of his humble servant.
Lk 1.46-55 • Baruch 5.1-9 • Philippians 1.4-6,8-11 • Lk 3.1-6

Mon 9 God will make his home among humans ; they will be his people and he shall be their God. His name is « God-with-them », and he will wipe all tears from their eyes.
Is 7.10-14 • *Rev 21.1-4* • Lk 1.1-10

Tue 10 Isaiah said: When he laid his hand upon me God said to me, « Do not fear all that people fear. Do not be afraid. I am the one whom you are to regard as holy. »
Is 8.11-13a,17-18 • Rev 21.5-7 • Lk 1.11-25

Wed 11 Isaiah said: God's Spirit will be upon his chosen one. He will not judge by appearances, but he will give a judgment of justice to the poor and needy.
Is 11.1-4a • Rev 21.10-11,22-25 • Lk 1.26-38

Thu 12 Elizabeth said to Mary: Blessed is she who believed in the fulfilment of all that the Lord promised her.
Is 11.5-9 • Rev 22.1-5,8-9 • *Lk 1.39-45*

Fri 13 I will trust and not be afraid, for God is my strength and my song.
Is 12.2-6 • 2 Peter 1.1-4 • Lk 1.46-56

Sat 14 The law of the Lord is perfect, new life for the soul. His commands are right, giving joy to the heart.
Ps 19 • Is 25.1,3-5 • Lk 1.57-66

SUN 15 John the Baptist declared: I baptise you with water, but one stronger than I is coming, and he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
Zephaniah 3.14-18a • Ph 4.4-7 • *Lk 3.10-18*

Mon 16 Seek perseverance, true devotion, brotherly kindness and love. If you live with these things they will bring you to a real knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Is 25.6-9 • *2 Pet 1.5 -11* • Lk 1.67-80

Tue 17 My soul longs for you in the night, Lord ; deep within me, my spirit seeks for you.
Is 26.4,7-9,12-13 • 2 Pet 1.12-16 • John 1.1-9

Wed 18 The Lord says: See I am laying a sure foundation stone for my people, and I will take justice for a measure and righteousness as a level.
Is 28.16-17a • 2 Pet 1.17-21 • Jn 1.19-28

Thu 19 Peter wrote: God is not being slow to carry out his promises, as some may think ; but he is patient with all, wanting nobody to be lost and for everyone to be brought to change their ways.
Is 29.18-23 • *2 Pet 3.3-4,8-9* • Jn 3.16-17

Fri 20 John the Baptist said about Jesus: He must grow greater, and I must grow smaller.
Is 30.15-18 • 2 Pet 3.13-18 • *Jn 3.26-30*

Sat 21 Isaiah said: The one who teaches you will no longer be hidden, you will see him with your eyes. And your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, « This is the way, walk in it. »
Is 30.19-21,26 • Jn 3.31-36a

SUN 22 With all my heart I seek you, Lord, I have treasured your promises in my heart that I might not sin against you.
Ps 119.9-16 • Micah 5.1-4a • Hebrews 10.5-10 • Lk 1.39-45

Mon 23 Jesus said: Just as the Father is the source of life, he has made the Son to be the source of life.
Is 32.15-20 • Jude 20-21 • *Jn 5.24-26*

Tue 24 The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means « God-with-us ».
Is 62.1-5 • Hebrews 1.1-6 • *Mt 1.18-25*

Wed 25 CHRISTMAS
When the kindness and love of God our saviour appeared, he saved us not because he was concerned with any righteous actions we had done, but only because of his compassionate mercy.
night: Is 9.1 -6 • Titus 2.11-14 • Lk 2.1-14
day: Is 62.11-12 • *Titus 3.4-7* • Lk 2.15-20

Thu 26 St STEPHEN
The Word was in the world, that had its being through him, and the world did not recognise him. But to all who accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.
Is 35.5-10 • Acts 7.55-60 • *Jn 1.9-13*

Fri 27 St JOHN
No one has ever seen God ; it is the only Son, who is at the Father's side, who has made him known.
Is 52.7-10 • 1 Jn 1.1-7 • *Jn 1.14-18*

Sat 28 Jesus said: Love each other as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: laying down one's life for one's friends.
Is 50.4-10 • 2 Cor 1.18-22 • *Jn 15.9-17*

SUN 29 Paul wrote: The mystery of Christ is that all peoples now share the same inheritance, being members of one body, and having received the same promise in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel
Is 25.6-9 • *Eph 3.2-6* • Lk 2.41-52

Mon 30 Bless those who persecute you ; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice ; mourn with those who mourn.
Genesis 50.15-21 • *Rm 12.14-21* • Lk 15.11-32

Tue 31 Jesus said to Thomas: Because you see me, you believe. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.
1 Kings 19.3-8 • Hebrews 11.8-16 • *Jn 20.24-29*

Chapters 1 - 35 of the Book of Isaiah

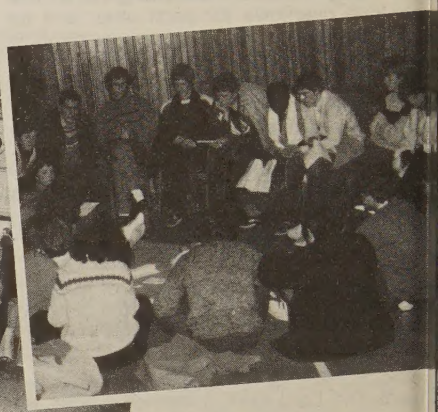
Isaiah was called to his ministry as a prophet while in the Temple in lerusalem, contemplating the holiness of God (6.1-8). To stay in the presence of the holy God, the prophet himself, just like his people (6.5-7 ; 1:18), needs to be purified and forgiven. In the name of the "Holy One of Israel", saiah denounces injustice among his people (1.16-17).

Isaiah lived in a time of political problems. Menaced by her neighbours o the north, during the second half of the 8th century B.C., Jerusalem sought the support of Assyria, a major power, only to end up dependent on ner. Isaiah reminds us that only God should be "declared holy", so that uman fears be dispersed (8.12-13). It is faith and trust in him that make it possible to stand firm (7.9 ; cf. 28.16 ; 30.15). While throughout history, uman schemes clash and collapse (8.10), "the plan of the Holy One of Israel" (5.19), though remaining hidden, is brought to fulfilment (2.1-4 ; also ee 25.6-9).

In his holiness, God is the God of his people, he wants to be close to nem. A descendent of David will bear the name of Emmanuel, that is "God vith us" (7.13-14). The child who will be born will have still other names ndicating his complete communion and unity with God: "Wonderful-Counellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace" (9.1-6). As the Spirit of God will rest on him, he will establish God's justice and peace on earth 11.1-10).

FROM MADRA

Together the meetings in MADRAS and B CELONA will form one "pilgrimage of trust" on ea The meetings will overlap and on certain days pra will take place at the same time in both places, wl will be a close link between the two meetings.



Madras offers of its best

People in Europe and in India have been asking why India was chosen as the location for the meeting, and why Madras?

Nearly three years ago two invitations arrived in Taizé: one from the Church of South India (a union of various non-Catholic churches) and another from the bishop who is responsible for the Indian Catholic youth suggesting a youth meeting in one of India's large cities. This was how, after many hesitations and much thought, a meeting was fixed in Madras for the end of 1985. Madras, whose name means "Madre de Dios", "Mother of God", is a city where christianity has ancient roots, tradition holding it as the burial place of the apostle Thomas. Should the Madras meeting have been just Indian or Asian? Those who invited us insisted that the meeting be worldwide because that dimension is so important for Christians in India.

The Madras meeting coincides with the end of International Youth Year which, in India as in other Asian countries, has had a big impact. Considering that the meeting would close the Youth Year, the youth committee of the Catholic episcopal conference has arranged that that there will be no other youth meetings in India during the final months of the year, to concentrate efforts on the preparation of the Madras meeting. The non-catholic Churches are also cooperating in the preparation and in hosting: the Church of South India (CSI), the Lutheran Churches and the Orthodox. To facilitate participation, the government will give young Indians a 50% discount on trains, which is vital for such a vast country where many young people would otherwise have difficulty paying for a long journey.

The first months of preparation with schools and movements have brought to light the questions of young people today in Madras and in India. Little by little an outline of the programme of the meeting has been worked out as well. Regarding that, there have been some very practical questions. For example the Catholic and the CSI cathedrals are too small to hold such numbers. Where would we find somewhere big enough and yet also peaceful for prayer? Something turned up in the district of Nungambakkam: the grounds of Loyola College which are surrounded by fields and trees where it would be possible to erect a bamboo roof for the prayer. But is it too beautiful? When an Indian family offers hospitality, they always give the best they have. A host will go as far as offering his own bed and sleeping on the floor so that the guest be made as comfortable as possible. The Indians of Madras want to welcome the young participants of the meeting by offering the most beautiful place of their city.

Because of the heat at midday it would be difficult to gather together then for prayer, under the roof which will be put up in the grounds. So the two daily common prayers will take place in the morning and late afternoon. But, during the day, as public transport is so crowded people will stay at Nungambakkam instead of having to move around the city. Between the morning prayer and the afternoon prayer, the meeting will continue in little groups, rather like the international meetings at Taizé. This will make it possible for young people from many regions of India with their different languages and customs, and the others from all over the world, to be together a lot and to discover the richness of communion between them. At Nungambakkam there will also be each day an "hour of Desert", in order to pray in silence and reflect, to make an interior resolution, to discover in God an inner life that has neither beginning nor end.

In the evenings, Indians go home early, especially in the south of India. So all the participants will be back home in the neighbourhoods by the end of the afternoon and will spend the evening there. We already know that many will be welcomed by families and it is often the poorest families that are the most welcoming. In the evenings, the people of the neighbourhood will have a time of sharing with participants. And each morning, those who wish can go to the local church.

As most of the participants coming from other countries will arrive before the meeting or stay on longer afterwards, there will be suggestions made for them with a view to having an in-depth insight into the reality of India. Many will be able to go and spend a few days in the villages around Madras or further away. Thus Indians who live too far from Madras to be able to welcome people during the meeting will also have the chance to share the best of what they have.

Young Indians have been very happy to learn that there will also be a European meeting in Barcelona when the Madras meeting is drawing to a close and that the two meetings will be closely linked. They see it as a unique way of sharing their hope with many others.

Registration for the Madras meeting is now closed. Those who have registered will receive the necessary practical information individually, by post from Taizé. □

Barcelo

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"Barcelona i be coming. For u preparing to hol means making o come those who pilgrimage.

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ropeans, going to Barcelona is also a way of being art of the Madras meeting. Brother Roger will leave dras the day before the meeting ends there, in er to go to Barcelona for part of the European eting and to bring news from India with him.

ing forward to the European Meeting

European meeting
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Church. So how can we get the whole parish to participate in this event? How can we communicate our enthusiasm for being a pilgrim Church? We are going to visit parish groups, other communities of the area which are different to us. We are trying to get to know the poorest people and the most marginalised who live near us. We are making contact with people from different parts of Spain who have come looking for work in our city; they bring with them their families, their culture, and a different language. In a word, we would like to cross barriers which we raise in our own country in order to love with an attitude of inner trust."

"I was born in Barcelona. My parents migrated from the province of Malaga. Adjusting to Catalonia was difficult for me because of the language, but with time, I have ended up feeling as Catalan as the others.

In my town, San Feliu de Llobregat, just beside Barcelona, there are two neighbourhoods living side by side: the Catalan neighbourhood and the immigrant one (people mostly from the south of Spain). The railway line marks the division. The separation is so great that they are like different worlds.

Ever since childhood I have been interested in the culture and history of the Catalan people, which is so often misunderstood. I have ended up making this culture and history my own.

As far as language and school are concerned, I have always been more attached to the immigrant parish, even though I have lived in the Catalan neighbourhood. By joining the scouts in the Catalan parish I have come into contact little by little. With time, the language was no longer a problem for me and I have been able to adapt myself perfectly to the Catalan neighbourhood.

We try to encourage the integration of young people who speak Catalan and those who speak Spanish through our scouting activities. It is not too difficult between children and young people. With the parents a greater effort is needed, not because of language but because the neighbourhoods are separate and they do not know one another.

A group of young people meets to pray each week in the parish, and we would like this prayer and the Saturday and Sunday Eucharists to become a time of celebration for young and old together. We would also like them to be occasions of meeting and reconciliation between the two neighbourhoods."

"We were surprised to see the number of young people who usually remain on the edge of parish activities showing an interest in the European meeting. It could be something which will bring life to the parishes.

Our town, Mataro, has one hundred thousand inhabitants. It is one of the five towns surrounding Barcelona which are important industrial centres. Here we are suffering a long economic crisis and the unemployment rate is one of the highest in Europe. Huge areas, where immigrants from the south of the country live, are seeing all hopes of a stable future fading. We are so used to surveys and statistics that we are ending up forgetting that they refer to people who live and suffer alongside us. Around Mataro a large population of black Africans work on the land. With often ridiculously low salaries, and sometimes with neither contracts nor insurance, they are an excluded community, despised in all respects.

Preparing ourselves to share the reality of our Church with those who will be welcomed in our town for the European meeting has made us discover that even very committed people are unaware of the actual dimensions of certain problems in their neighbourhoods: unemployment, delinquency, drugs and poverty. The preparation for the meeting must mean an openness towards our surroundings: seeing what is really there and not imagining what we would like to see. What can we do to be a welcoming Church and to let even the most sceptical find the beginnings of friendship in the Church? We have to find people who are already committed in these situations, groups or communities who give the best of themselves. We need to go looking for signs of hope, ready to enter into the mystery of lives freely given for the service of the Good News of Jesus, even if all do not explicitly recognise him. We can meet people who, before us, have said yes to Christ for a whole lifetime.

While doing all this work, another form of preparation for the meeting is a prayer which we have held each week for four years. It is a chance to feel welcomed and to place before God all that has happened during the week. Time permitting, there is prayer together each morning before work or study. This started on our return from the Cologne meeting last year and it will continue, like a light that never goes out, beyond the meeting in Barcelona." □

January

Wed 1 The Lord says, « I know what plans I have for you: they are plans of peace and not of disaster, plans to give you hope and a future.
Jeremiah 29.11-14 • Gal 4.4-7 • Mt 13.31-35

Thu 2 In Christ dwells all the fullness of God, and in him you too have been given fullness. God has brought you to life with him. He has forgiven us all our sins.
Isaiah 44.21-23 • *Colossians 2.9-14* • Luke 6.35-38

Fri 3 Thus says the One who is the First and the Last, the One who died and who has come to life again: Remain faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.
Lamentations 3.21-26 • *Rev 2.8-11* • Jn 6.66-69

Sat 4 Those whom the Lord has set free will return with everlasting joy.
Is 35.5-10 • Jn 1.29-34

SUN 5 May God enlighten the eyes of your heart so that you may see the hope to which he calls you.
Ecclesiasticus 24.1-2,8-12 • *Eph 1.3-6,15-18* • Jn 1.1-8

Mon 6 EPIPHANY
When they saw the star, the wise men were filled with joy. As they entered, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they bowed down and worshipped him.
Is 60.1-6 • Eph 3.1-3a,5-6 • *Mt 2.1-12*

ma 7 Paul wrote: I give thanks to Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has given me strength, and has judged me faithful enough to call me to his service.
Genesis 1.1-5 • *1 Tim 1.1-2,12-17* • Jn 1.35-42

Wed 8 Bless the Lord, my soul ; let all that is in me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, my soul ; forget none of his good deeds.
Ps 103 • Gn 1.26-27 • 1 Tim 2.1-8 • Jn 1.43-51

Thu 9 Christ was made visible in the flesh, attested by the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, and taken up in glory.
Gn 1.31-2.3 • *1 Tim 3.14-16* • Jn 2.1-11

Fri 10 God formed man, he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being.
Gn 2.4b-8 • 1 Tim 4.4-11 • Jn 2.13-22

Sat 11 Jesus said: What is born of the Spirit is spirit. The wind blows wherever it pleases ; you hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.
Gn 8.1-12 • *Jn 3.1-8*

SUN 12 Peter said: God sent his word, and announced the good news of peace through Jesus Christ: he is the Lord of all.
Is 42.1-7 • *Acts 10.34-38* • Lk 3.15-16,21-22

Mon 13 God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost but have eternal life.
Gn 9.11-16 • 1 Tim 4.12-5.2 • *Jn 3.13-17*

ma 14 God said to Abram, « Leave your country, your people and your father's house, for the land I will show you. » And Abram set out, as the Lord had told him.
Gn 12.1-7 • 1 Tim 6.3-10 • Jn 3.22-36a

Wed 15 Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you, « Give me a drink », you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.
Gn 13.1-18 • 1 Tim 6.11-16 • *Jn 4.1-14*

The first part of the book of Genesis

The first chapter of Genesis is not a formal description of the universe, but a penetrating look at creation in the way that God conceived of it and willed it. The world is not an orphan. It has a beginning, and at that beginning there is God who created it (1.1). The last of the creatures to arrive on the scene is the human-being, who is made "in the image of God". In the complementarity of man and woman, there is God's likeness (1.26-27) ; Humans are called to grow among, and thanks to, the rest of creation (1.28-29) ; and, made in God's likeness, to be a reflection of God in the midst of creation.

The account of chapters 2 and 3 emphasizes that God associates the man with his work: he has to cultivate and take care of God's garden (2.15) and to name the animals (2.19). By giving him a commandment (2.16-17), God offers man the liberty to respond with trust in God without being, through the knowledge of good and evil, the isolated master of his own life. The temptation of sin, that is the temptation of separating oneself from God, is then fed by mistrust: God, who nevertheless is the giver of everything, is suspected of meanness and jealousy (3.1-5).

In the following chapter (4.1-16), it is the refusal of any responsability towards those who share the same human condition (4.9) that appears as the central core of sin.

Faced with the powers of evil and destruction, should we forget that the whole of creation is "very good" (1.31) ? No, for the texts which speak about a threat to all life on earth (chapters 6-9) also celebrate the "the eternal covenant between God and every living being".

Thu 16 Jesus said: Anyone who drinks the water that I give will never be thirsty again. The water that I shall give will turn into a spring of water within them, welling up to eternal life.
Gn 15.1-6 • 1 Tim 6.17-21 • *Jn 4.14-24*

Fri 17 Jesus said: My food is to do the will of the One who sent me, and to complete his work.
Gn 18.1-15 • 2 Tim 1.1-5 • *Jn 4.25-34*

Sat 18 Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth. Give me an undivided heart that I may revere your name.
Ps 86 • Gn 28.12-17 • Jn 4.35-42

SUN 19 Isaiah said: For the sake of my people I will not keep silent, I will not rest until her integrity shines out like the breaking of day. And then the nations will see your justice, and you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow.
Is 62.1-5 • 1 Cor 12.4-11 • Jn 2.1-12

Mon 20 Paul wrote to Timothy: Do not be ashamed to be a witness to our Lord, but rather join with me in suffering for the Gospel, relying on the power of God, who has saved us and has given us a holy calling.
Gn 32.23-31 • *2 Tim 1.6-9a* • Jn 4.46-53

ma 21 Paul wrote to Timothy: A precious deposit of faith has been entrusted to you, guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit.
Gn 50.15-21 • *2 Tim 1.9b-14* • Jn 5.1-9a

Wed 22 Let love and faithfulness never leave you ; write them upon your heart.
Proverbs 3.3-7 • 2 Tim 2.1-7 • Jn 5.19-23

Thu 23 Jesus said: Whoever listens to my word and believes in the one who sent me has crossed over from death to life.
Pr 3.27-31 • 2 Tim 2.8-13 • *Jn 5.24-29a*

Fri 24 Above all else, watch over your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.
Pr 4.18,20-27 • 2 Tim 2.14-24 • Jn 5.30-37a

Sat 25 My hope is in you, Lord, free me from my sins. I am silent, I will open my mouth no more, for it is you who are at work.
Ps 39 • Pr 8.22-23,27-31 • Jn 5.41,43-44

SUN 26 Just as the body is one unit, while having many members, so we have all been baptised with one Spirit into one body.
Nahum 8.3,8 -10 • *1 Cor 12.12-30* • Lc 4.14-21

Mon 27 Jesus, seeing that the people were about to come and take him by force and make him king, withdrew into the mountains all alone.
Pr 16.9,19-20,32 • 2 Tim 3.10-17 • *Jn 6.1-15*

ma 28 Let your heart worship the Lord steadily, all day long. Surely a future exists for you, your hope will not be destroyed.
Pr 23.15-18 • 2 Tim 4.1-8 • Jn 6.16-26

Wed 29 Give praise to the Lord ! It is good to sing praises to the one who heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.
Ps 147 • Pr 30.5-9 • 2 Tim 4.16-18 • Jn 6.22-27

Thu 30 Paul wrote: If I were to try to win the approval of people rather than the approval of God, then I should no longer be a servant of Christ.
Zechariah 2.14-17 • *Galatians 1.1-10* • Jn 6.28-35

Fri 31 Jesus said: The will of the one who sent me is that I should lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up on the last day.
Ze 3.1,3-7 • Ga 1.11-24 • *Jn 6.37-40*

February

Sat 1 You hold me by my hand, Lord, and guide me with your counsel. If I am with you, I desire nothing upon the the earth.
Ps 73 • Ze 8.1-8 • Jn 6.41-50

SUN 2 PRESENTATION OF THE LORD
When Simeon saw the child Jesus, he praised God and said: Now, Lord, you can let your servant depart in peace, according to your word. For my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all people to see.
Malachi 3.1-4 • Hebrews 2.14-18 • *Lk 2.22-40*

Mon 3 Jesus said: I am the living bread, come down from from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.
Ze 8.12-13,16-17a • Ga 2.16-21 • *Jn 6.51-58*

ma 4 Seeing that many were leaving him, Jesus said to his disciples, « What about you, do you also want to leave ? » Peter replied, « To whom could we go, Lord ? You have the words of eternal life. »
Ze 9.9-10 • Ga 3.1-9 • *Jn 6.60-69*

Wed 5 Paul wrote: There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Ze 12.10,13.1 • *Ga 3.23-29* • Jn 7.14-18

Thu 6 God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, « Father ! »
Ze 14.7-10 • *Ga 4.1-7* • Jn 7.24-30

Fri 7 God said to Jeremiah: Go to everyone I send you to. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to protect you.
Jeremiah 1.4-10 • Ga 5.1,13-18 • Jn 7.37-44

Sat 8 The Lord says: I watch over my word to see it fulfilled.
Jr 1.11-12,17-19 • Jn 8.1-11

SUN 9 Jesus said to Simon Peter, « Put out into deep water, and let down your nets for a catch. » « Master, » Simon answered, « we have worked hard all night without catching anything ; but because you say so, I will let down the nets. » And having done this, they caught a great quantity of fish.
Is 6.1-8 • 1 Cor 15.1-11 • *Lk 5.1-11*

Mon 10 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there can be no law.
Jr 2.1-5 • *Ga 5.22-25* • Jn 8.12-16

ma 11 Bear one another's burdens, and fulfil in this way the law of Christ.
Jr 2.10-13 • *Ga 6.1-5* • Jn 8.26b-30

Wed 12 ASH WEDNESDAY
God has reconciled the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them, and he has entrustd to us this message of reconciliation.
Joel 2.12-13 • *2 Cor 5.18-6.2* • Mt 6.1-6,16-18

Thu 13 Let us not become weary in doing good, the harvest will come in its good time, if we do not give up.
Jr 3.12-17 • *Ga 6.6-10* • Jn 8.31-36

Fri 14 The Lord says: Walk in the way of good, and you will find rest for your souls.
Jr 6.14-16 • Ga 6.14-18 • Jn 8.50-54,56-59

Sat 15 Jesus is well able to understand our weaknesses. He was tempted in every way as we are, yet was without sin. So let us approach God with confidence, that we may receive mercy and his grace to help us.
Jr 7.1-7 • *Hebrews 4.12-16*

HOME COUNTIES
Guildford: Mike Horkan, 893741/898402. **Brighton:** Mo Atkinson, 595004. **Ashford (Kent):** Michael and Joanna Butler, (0233) 20371. **Medway Towns:** Rev Roderick Hamer and "FORMAT" group, 362651. **Leigh on Sea:** Fr. Simon and Joanna Law, (0702) 76062. **St Albans:** Chris and Ann Blandford, 63979. **Bedford:** Polly Elder, 16 Cherry Walk, Elstow, MK42 7PB. **Dunstable:** Sister Theresa Laverick, (0582) 863230. **Princes Risborough:** Margaret and Ray Stokes, (08444) 5942. **Aylesbury:** Peter Sketch, 83071. **Milton Keynes:** The Thompson family, 73313.
GREATER LONDON
Sat. 23rd Nov, WC1: Afternoon of prayer and sharing at the Catholic Chaplaincy, 111 Gower Street. Contact Jackie Hynes, 578 5841 for details. **Saturday 14th Dec, Croydon:** Afternoon meeting at St Andrew's Church, Brook Road, Thornton Heath. Arrive 12.30pm. Details: Fr. Alistair Warwick, 684 3013.
From January 1986, a pilgrimage will begin in London. Contacts: Sue Mayo, 3 Countess Road, NW5 (485 0851); Lorna Marson, 134 Shooters Hill Road, SE3 8RN. Sue writes:
"In the days of the early Church, Christians would often travel great distances simply to visit one another and to pray.
In London we would like to undertake a pilgrimage in the same spirit, people of one neighbourhood going to join another. Every fortnight, on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon, in one area of London, pilgrims will gather, and then set off, by foot or public transport, to visit another neighbourhood.
There they will be welcomed by people from several churches, to meet, and then to have tea and evening prayer together.
Two weeks later, those who have provided hospitality become pilgrims, and set off to visit others in their turn, thus forming one continuous pilgrimage."
Perhaps there is an idea there for other cities besides London....

Programme: participation in the life of the parishes and neighbourhoods of BARCELONA and surrounding region; prayer together twice a day; discussion groups. Possibility for those who wish to spend the five days in silence.

Registration: Send your form in before December 1st. Those hoping to organise a group to go the meeting are asked to let us know, even if nothing is certain. Give an estimate of numbers before November 15th.

Arrival: Monday morning December 30 between 7 am and 12 noon (and not before, except for the work, animation and music teams).

Departure: Friday mid-afternoon January 3rd.

Age: at least 17 yrs. Young people under 17: only if accompanied by their family or a group leader.

Accommodation: with families, in church halls, or with religious communities. Essential to bring air-mattress and sleeping-bag. Separate dormitories for boys and girls.

Cost: pay on arrival in Pesetas. Those whose currency is strong help those from countries with weaker currencies or whose governments forbid the export of money. People from Britain and Scandinavia are asked to contribute between 4500 and 5000 Pesetas; those from Ireland between 4000 and 4500 Pesetas. This includes meals during the meeting, and a travel pass on public transport.

Work teams, animators and musicians: (possibility restricted to those who are 17-30 years) Those who can help in these teams should arrive on Dec. 28th, and indicate this on their registration forms. A coach for helpers will depart from London mid-afternoon Dec. 27th (contact Harris Coaches).Working usually also allows participation in the life of the parishes.

Travel: 1) People can get a group train ticket or hire a coach. (We cannot organise accommodation for coach drivers in Barcelona.)
2) From London, special coaches depart Sun. Dec. 29th (9.30 am Ealing, 10.20 am Victoria) returning for 3pm Sat. Jan. 4th. **Book well in advance.** Return fares: Youth (up to 26 yrs): £65, Adult: £75. Harris Coaches, Manor Rd., West Thurrock, GRAYS, Essex RM16 1EH. Tel: (0708) 864911. Tickets available in the Irish Republic through: J Barter & Sons, 92 St Patrick Street, CORK. Tel: (021) 24261 Fares: IR£88.50 (Youth), IR£98.50 (Adult)

Overnight stop: you are welcome to stay in Ealing (West London), on the way to Barcelona. Contact Cathy Crozier, 8 Cain Court, Castlebar Mews, Ealing, LONDON W5. Tel: 01-997-5870 (home), 636-7366 (work). Or John Meacock: 01-840-2835.

The European Meeting in Barcelona

REGISTRATION FORM to be filled in by all participants and sent, before 1st December (closing date) to: European Meeting, Taizé Community, 71250 CLUNY, France.

FIRST NAME :

FAMILY NAME :

ADDRESS :

(with post code and country)

Tel.: ...../..... Age: .....

Please circle "yes" or "no" to show which applies :

- I will make my own way to Barcelona — yes / no
  otherwise: I will be joining the group going from the town of: .....
  leader's name: .....
- I will arrive in BARCELONA December 30th — yes / no
  I will arrive in BARCELONA December 28th — yes / no
  to participate in the teams for *(please circle):* Work Animation Music
- I receive the Letter from Taizé regularly — yes / no
- I would like .... additional forms (photocopy your own if possible)
- As I cannot sleep on the floor, I would like a bed — yes / no
  If so, say whether you are *(please circle):*
  woman man couple family with children disabled with helper
- To assist the reception, if you have already arranged your own accommodation, kindly state the address and the parish: .....

ZAIRE

■ From a young couple who have been visiting parishes in several African countries:

"We have met the same question throughout our visit to Kinshasa: how can real involvement and awareness be created among young Christians? Some Church leaders are deeply worried about this.

Among so many meetings, we would like to tell you about one evening in a parish in Kinshasa. Just before the set time, there was only one man there. The priest rang the bells and some young people arrived, from a Catholic church choir. Then mamas and papas, as they say here, filled up a few benches. All of a sudden there was a rush. Young Baptists from further down the river arrived, others from West Zaire and also members of the Salvation Army. The leaders of the choirs chose the songs together and worked out who would direct what. At this stage the church was packed with five hundred people, while we had been expecting about fifty. Children, young people and adults squashed together on the benches. Even the sanctuary was filled. Short testimonies shared little signs of reconciliation in Africa and elsewhere in the world: in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Brazzaville. God is fostering fellowship in his people and is awakening commitment among Christians with regard to the suffering in our societies. Together we thought about the divisions, the injustices and the sores that are there in our parishes, our families, our area. These are calls from Christ, have we heard them?

We had planned to hold a workshop after a few prayers and songs, but because of the number of people it was necessary to improvise. Leaders of different Churches and lots of young people noted down the themes to reflect on them in their parishes. At home, they will continue to meet on Sunday evenings to share."

ARGENTINA

■ From a sister who works in a very poor part of Buenos Aires:

"One of the things which strikes me the most is the people's generosity and hospitality. Their doors are constantly open. Mind you, their shacks do not even have doors. People in cities often want to 'keep up appearances'. But here, what is there to hide? Last Saturday our little neighbourhood community met to pray and to share about the Word of God. One of the neighbours, Emilia, introduced a young woman saying: "I found her all alone on the street with her two month old daughter and told her to come and live with my family." Emilia did not even have a blanket to share in her little two-square-metre room. What an example she gave us! Another neighbour, realizing that our meeting place had become too small gave a little bit of her own small plot to make it bigger. She has five children and an alcoholic husband. She has conviction: "I know that God will help me, that we will have what we need." Her shack only protects her a little bit from the summer sun and the winter cold, and she has neither water nor electricity. "God will provide," she says. I have also met the suffering Christ in those who cannot be admitted to the hospital because they come from this area and no room will be provided for them. One day I went there with two old people who had ulcers on their legs and they were waiting from five in the afternoon until eleven at night only to be told that there were no beds for them. It is one thing to talk about all that, but another thing to live it."

BRITAIN

■ From a girl in Liverpool:

"I thought you would like to know one sign of hope three of us have found in our lives after returning from Taizé. We share the house with two other friends during university termtime. We started having morning prayer together, making it simple : the day's reading from the Letter from Taizé, 10 minutes of silence for prayer, and ending in the Lord's Prayer and the Grace said together. One of the people of the house, who did not come to Taizé, had never before joined us in worship but just came one day and joined us. A week later he was asking to take his turn in reading and starting the Lord's Prayer after the silence. We felt so thankful for the simplicity and openness that was present, and which had enabled him to find he could pray with us. Since then we've found it so easy to ask others to meals, because we know that we will help each other welcome them. And that they will find a laughing and open household."

BRITAIN and IRELAND

A new 1/2 hour documentary film about Taizé will be shown on Channel 4 on Christmas Eve : Tuesday 24th December, 4.30pm, "Taizé – that little springtime".

ASIA

■ From a fraternity of Taizé brothers:

"I am writing this letter late at night, and what a terrible night it is! There has been another murder in our village. A man belonging to one political party was killed by a group from the other party. All at once the village entered into a kind of state of war. You hear shouts, gunshots and explosions everywhere. People are very frightened. One woman went to shelter with her children in the church and two young people came to our house."

I am kneeling before the Eucharistic reserve amid this awful noise, having just come back from a round of visits to terrified families. I did my best to console them. My concern is above all for the women and children. You can hear armed gangs passing on the road, but I am almost sure that our little church will not be touched."

SPAIN

■ From the young father of a Basque family:

"What does being on pilgrimage mean to me? Ever since adolescence, I have been searching deeply for God. This great enthusiasm of my life was present right through those years of discovery of the world, of love and of others. But nothing took shape until I felt that a living and personal God lived within me and was calling me by name. The risk of a rootless mysticism was balanced by the simultaneous discovery of the brotherhood of all people, that we were all journeying together.

Now I'm married and, as a couple, we want to be a family that makes obvious its desire to welcome others and to offer refuge to "weary travellers". We want to share our love so as to take a step forward rather than becoming closed-in or coming to a standstill.

Of course, as a teacher, my work makes me one of the privileged. But there is lots to be done towards showing children a model of life where we are called to go further than just settling down in an easy life!

I could not do all of this without celebrating the joy of my faith and sharing this search with others in my parish community. I try to help young people in our neighbourhood in their discovery of the living God, and we are seeking to make the liturgy a more and more clear expression of faith in Jesus."

The **LETTER FROM TAIZE** is published bimonthly in ten languages. A supporting subscription helps subsidize a solidarity fund, making it possible for those who cannot pay to receive the LETTER.

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Correspondence : Letter from Taizé, Taizé Community, 71250 Cluny, France